

## FOCUS ON MARKETS WORKSHOP MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2012

**Workshop Led by:** Tina Heathcote

**Participants:** Adrian Brown, Alan Thompson, Chris Hallam, Derek Bodey, Freda Willis, Geoffrey Willis, Ian Howarth, Janet Miller, Janine Morris, Jean Todd, John Phillips, Kathryn Barton, Liz Mackenzie, Philip Barton, Rachel Clarke, Rachel Hoodith, Richard Lower, Richard Silson, Roddie MacLean, Sally Potter

### 1. PRESENTATIONS

#### 1.1 Introduction (Tina)

Markets are an emotive subject. Tina stressed that we must be analytical, not critical, accept that we are where we are, and not waste time casting blame for what has gone before.

#### 1.2 Markets and the Town Team (Roddie)

Roddie reminded us of the original Town Team concept, as developed for the Portas bid, of a single 'Main Street' (Spring Gardens through to the High Street) and of linking and mixing all that the town has to offer, both conceptually and geographically. This notion has been the focus of many of our projects so far, particularly the Christmas Crawl and Spring Fair, and still underpins what we are trying to achieve - a greater trading area. The current division into separate retail areas is confusing and unhelpful.

#### 1.3 Markets National and Local (Janet)

Based on a recent meeting with Graham Wilson, chief executive of the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA), on 7<sup>th</sup> October, see John Estruch's notes for more detail.

A market is defined as a 'concourse of traders' (at least 5) operating on a day licence with no security of tenure. They can either be authorised by charter (as the main Buxton Market is) or by the Local Authority under the 1984 Food Act.

Over the last year, 73% of markets have grown or stayed the same, 27% have shrunk. Markets run by local authorities tend to be the ones that are declining.

In Buxton the 'main' market is shrinking, though successful ones are held in the Pavilion Gardens and elsewhere. On the main market no stalls are provided, traders provide their own. The general retail areas of the town are split.

NABMA recommendations were:

- Integrate, make it appear to be a single market offer
- Good branding and publicity is essential
- Revitalising a market takes major effort (less once it is up and running)
- Consider reducing frequency, eg focus on one day per week, maybe not all through the year
- Establish a set of rules and enforce them - but be sure they are rules that work for the traders
- There is no perfect layout, but arrange stalls to encourage people to visit the whole of the market
- Providing standard stalls improves the look, these can be leased.

#### 1.4 Markets Specialist and Pilot (Alan)

The Treacle Market in Macclesfield and the Artisan Markets in Knutsford, Wilmslow, Northwich and Middlewich are highly successful, with a mix of arts and crafts, general traders, food stalls, community and youth groups as well as music and entertainment. There is an enjoyable atmosphere, a continental feel to them, with traders and shoppers all obviously enjoying being there.

The Treacle Market has grown from 34 stalls in the beginning to 140 now, with a long waiting list for places. They have separate themed areas for food, arts and crafts, community groups and so on, and the music is in a slightly separate area from the stalls. On Treacle Market Sundays all the shops in the market area are open (though those outside the immediate vicinity tend not to be).

The Artisan Market stalls are laid out back to back down the centre of the main shopping street, in some cases these are much narrower than Spring Gardens, they have negotiated with the Emergency Services to allow this. A recent survey found that:

- 97% of people surveyed think it is positive for the town
- 77% of retailers report greater or equal footfall
- 73% of retailers report greater or equal takings
- More than 90% of retailers support the event

Both organisations have branding and publicity 'in spades'.

(There is more detail about the Artisan Markets in the notes of the meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> September, see also [www.treaclemacclesfield.co.uk](http://www.treaclemacclesfield.co.uk) and [www.theartisanmarket.co.uk](http://www.theartisanmarket.co.uk))

## 2. GROUP WORK

Four groups addressed a series of questions - a summary of the responses follows:

### (1) What are Markets for? (2) What is their purpose?

Making money; trading goods to the general public; provide cheaper or better things; quality and speciality products; buying and selling local produce; bringing people together; community building; filling gaps/expanding offer; revenue for participants; convenience for locals; attract visitors; act as a hub; increase footfall generally; an event; entertainment; a unique experience.

### (3) Who are they for?

Producers; local people; visitors; tourists; best for producers - cheap outlets; community.

### (4) Why have them?

Tradition; demand; footfall; social and community value (talk and gossip); vibrancy; inclusive (no-one is excluded, by price or anything else); cachet (busy, safe, traditional English feel); tourist destination; raise revenue for the traders and the town, eg hospitality providers.

### (5) What are the Issues around Markets?

Weather and no cover (or are people just more nesh?); no indoor alternative; competition with fixed traders; location; accessibility; lack of directions; limited parking (need a way to extend stay by text); no promotion to potential traders; needs to be made easy (eg insurance); image of existing market (scruffy, not enough stalls, windswept car park); needs vision and branding; frequency (is 2 per week too many?); timing (is Saturday best for families?).

### (6) What are the benefits?

Brings the town together; good for community spirit; provides option for those who can't/won't shop out of town; attracts tourists; market town cachet; creates a 'place to be'.

### (7) What sort of Markets do we need?

Not 'needed' specifically now, possibly in the future; to attract visitors and compete with other towns; needed for specialist things you can't get elsewhere.

### (8) What sort of Markets do we want?

Successful; thriving; more than just retail (music, facepainting, entertainment, a leisure experience); a 'Spring Fair' every Saturday; varied markets (specialist and seasonal, local produce, continental); include community stalls eg National Trust; entertainment.

### (9) Who should organise them?

Not HPBC (or not the ones doing it now); traders, or others with a vested interest; an external organisation (but commercial interests may not be same as community need); specialist organiser (with support from other organisations); idea - largely self-managed via the internet; not just the council (retailers and community groups should have a say; independent organisation.

### (10) How often should they happen?

Every weekend; forget Tuesday; monthly; weekly for food, as and when for specialism; idea - every Saturday but have different speciality say monthly; idea - weekday evenings would be more attractive to working people; fill the 5-7pm dead gap.

### (11) What are the Next Steps?

Continue discussions, internally and with national organisations; market survey of customers re where they are from (stallholders? University?); support development of Hardwick Hall/Town Hall vision; indoor market in Town Hall; push on with Artisan Market pilot; 'roaming' market, use different places on different days; schedule markets to coincide with Pavilions Gardens/Turner Memorial (give appearance of single offer); work with and co-operate with Terry Crawford; learn from our competitor towns; develop idea of evening offer - pub/restaurant plus stalls plus entertainment in sheltered outdoor area.

## 3. CONCLUSION

A consensus has not yet been reached on every issue, and an overarching strategy for markets in the town has yet to emerge. In many areas however there is a very clear consensus, and a number of new ideas came out of the discussions which the group will develop further.